



State of Illinois
Bruce Rauner, Governor



Illinois Department of Transportation
Randall S. Blankenhorn, Secretary

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Two IDOT Projects Earn Top Regional Awards

Chicago-St. Louis rail, I-55-LSD interchange cited for quality of life, innovation

SPRINGFIELD – The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials has singled out the Illinois Department of Transportation’s Chicago-St. Louis passenger rail project and the Interstate 55-Lake Shore Drive interchange reconstruction for top honors among Midwest states in the America’s Transportation Awards.

“A strong, vibrant transportation system creates jobs and sets Illinois apart from the rest of the country,” said Gov. Bruce Rauner. “This honor and these projects further demonstrate the hard work we are doing every day for the people of Illinois, while also reinforcing my commitment to strengthening our status as the country’s transportation hub.”

The Chicago-St. Louis passenger rail project earned the “Quality of Life/Community Development, Large Project” award. Designed to improve reliability, safety and travel times, the project overhauled the most popular Amtrak route in the Midwest and one that touches multiple Illinois communities. Other components included updated infrastructure as well as new locomotives and stations that enhance the customer experience and serve as centerpieces of downtown redevelopment efforts and gateways for tourism.

The I-55-Lake Shore Drive interchange won the “Best Use of Technology & Innovation, Medium Project” prize. To limit disruptions to one of the Midwest’s most critical economic corridors during the lengthy interchange improvements, a temporary bridge was built by raising into place an existing bridge between the new and old structures to accommodate inbound I-55 traffic to southbound Lake Shore Drive, avoiding extended closures and detours.

“Innovation and enhancing quality of life are the cornerstones of any great transportation project,” said Illinois Transportation Secretary Randy Blankenhorn. “We are thrilled that our projects have been recognized for excellence in these areas and proud of the work we’ve done for the residents of Illinois.”

Announced today by AASHTO’s Mid America Association of State Transportation Officials, the America’s Transportation Awards is the leading competition among state departments of

transportation in the country. This year's awards are the most ever won by Illinois and the first for an IDOT-led project since 2015.

“State DOTs are committed to making America safer, better and stronger by improving connections between communities both large and small, urban and rural,” said John Schroer, AASHTO president and commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Transportation. “The transportation projects in this competition are part of a national multimodal network that is moving millions of people and tons of goods where they need to go every day.”

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